

~~SECRET~~
CONFIDENTIAL

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

~~OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES~~

31 July 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

01 JUL 1980

SUBJECT: O/NIE Comments on Trends Indicated in NIE's and SNIE's on Cuba since Castro's Takeover

Ref : Memo for the DCI dated 30 July 1962, Subject: "Positions on Seven Major Aspects of Cuban Situation in NIE's and SNIE's since Castro's Takeover."

Castro's Relations With the Communists

1. From the beginning it was noted that Castro was very close to the Communists and that they were in a position to influence him. Increasing Communist influence on the regime was recognized in March, 1960. No distinction between Castro's policies and those of the Cuban Communists was perceptible in December, 1960, but at that time it was suggested that the Soviets wished to avoid becoming overextended in Cuba. In March, 1962 it was pointed out that Castro was seeking Soviet recognition and commitments, but that the Soviets had taken care to avoid granting his wishes in these matters. In the latest estimate we judge that the Soviets and the veteran Cuban Communists have accepted Castro's primacy and that the USSR is becoming deeply committed to the Cuban regime.

GROUP 1

Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

~~SECRET~~
CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

The Cuban Economy

2. Progressive estimates have shown a steady decline in the Cuban economy. Early papers noted some improvement in the production of foodstuffs. Signs of disorganization were spotted in December, 1960, but it was noted that Soviet assistance had helped to reduce the impact of US sanctions. In November 1961 major shortages and considerable disorganization were apparent. In March 1962 the Cuban economy appeared to be in for a difficult time, and in July the judgment is that the economy is in deep trouble and unlikely to see significant overall improvement for several years.

Military

3. The disorganization of the armed forces was noted in the early days after Castro's takeover, as was the rapid penetration of Communist influence. The army's effectiveness was judged to be low in March, 1960. The development of the militia was observed in December, 1960, and considered to be the probable nucleus of a reorganized army, but its combat efficiency was rated as low. In November, 1961, the effect of Bloc arms deliveries and instruction was cited as the cause of improvement in the capabilities of the Cuban armed forces. The latest estimate makes the judgment that the capabilities of the Cuban armed forces have been and are being

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

greatly enhanced by the Soviet Bloc's provision of military equipment and instruction, although capabilities remain essentially defensive.

Security

4. Takeover of the security services by Communist-oriented followers of Castro was noted shortly after Castro came to power. The strengthening of Castro's personal control over the security apparatus and its increased efficiency was indicated in November, 1961. There has been a steady improvement in the efficiency of the security system and a gradual increase in the number of persons involved in one kind of security activity or another.

Popular Attitudes

5. Favorable attitudes toward Castro rose to a peak shortly after he came to power and then fell off rather quickly. Disillusionment was noted to have started spreading in mid-1959 within the middle and professional classes. Increased disaffection due to exasperation over the privations, exactions, and regimentation imposed by the regime was noted through 1960 and 1961, but it was believed in March 1962 that a quarter of the population continued to give their positive support to the regime. The last estimate

- 3 -

~~SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

judges that disaffection continues to increase, but that it is passive rather than active. About a fifth of the population remains actively behind Castro.

Resistance

6. Small scale anti-Castro guerrilla activity was noted in June 1960. Internal resistance increased in the second half of 1960 and continued to do so until April 1961. After a considerable decrease following the unsuccessful invasion, resistance activity picked up again in the spring of 1962. The last estimate concluded that if arms and supplies became available and confidence were created in the likelihood of outside support, resistance activity and potential would increase. It was believed, however, that some internal event to shake the regime and substantial outside support would be required for the success of even a well-supplied insurrection.

Castro and Latin America

7. The Castro revolution stimulated strong sympathetic response in many quarters throughout Latin America, although it was generally looked on with alarm by conservatives and most governments. By the end of 1961, however, disillusionment had set in. The latest estimate says that there is widespread disillusionment with Castro in Latin America, but that a Communist Cuba is still a danger in unstable situations like that in Venezuela and Guatemala.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

CONFIDENTIAL

~~SECRET~~